

WASHINGTON COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prevention of Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Abuse
2. Expand educational curriculum and prevent truancy
3. Improve curriculum and standards for preschool programs

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19)

physical and mental well-being in the county.

Substance abuse

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create a substance abuse prevention and treatment program
- provide parent awareness classes on substance abuse
- create anonymous tip line (no fault) to aid to eradicate drugs in school

Teen pregnancy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide education for birth control
- provide prenatal/parental education
- provide education for STD's

Poor dental care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage more preventive dental service
- provide education to parents with regard to things they can do
- encourage tobacco cessation

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Child and domestic abuse

Policy Council Action Steps:

- education for prevention for children
- target age levels throughout school years
- target school nurses to help with this

Safe educational environment

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide safety and crisis intervention training to pre-school workers and students
- provide CPR and fire safety classes to pre-school workers
- place cross walks at all county schools

Prevalence of drugs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- broaden the DARE program, to include all schools
- prevention programs through local churches
- mentoring program for problem youth

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

College readiness and alternative programs to college

Policy Council Action Steps:

- offer a college career day each school year to all high school students
- offer a career day each school year to all high school students with emphasis on vocational, technical and military training.
- offer a program to improve students testing abilities for college and non-college entry exams

Social workers for schools

Policy Council Action Steps:

- for social workers to counsel with parents and children concerning truancy problems
- to aid and counsel with parent and children concerning potential dropouts as well as assisting dropouts with obtaining alternative educational source, i.e. (GED and vocational training).
- to handle specific social issues concerning children in the school system

Vocational education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- create career directional programs
- offer specific vocational skill training
- offer training to high school seniors to allow them to obtain certificates shortly after graduation, such as through a CNA program

Early Care and

Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Improve quality of already existing programs in the county

Policy Council Action Steps:

- develop educational curriculums for the programs
- get more funding to improve the quality of the county's programs
- get accreditation for all programs

Expand the Head Start program to other areas in the county

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with Mobile Community Action in developing Head Start programs to all areas of the county
- locate facilities for this program
- get community involvement in support of said program

Provide daycare services to children during extended working hours in an effort to support working parents and increase child supervision

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide daycare services for children of families who work extended hours
- develop educational curriculum/tutoring programs for children receiving evening daycare services
- provide for the safety and security of after hour facilities

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Financial stability for families

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek to get an employment office in Washington County
- continue to work and help local providers get area jobs (unemployment rate now down to 5.4% versus a former rate of 16.4%)
- provide assistance in obtaining information relating to economic resources and availability through other agencies

Vocational classes training

Policy Council Action Steps:

- since new garment plant is in operation, look to compliment this activity by initiating seamstress vocational training
- work with local economic development groups to bring more quality jobs to this area
- continue to maintain dialogue with local educators to enhance future vocational job training

Expansion economic sector

Policy Council Action Steps:

- CPC (and members) seek to help small businesses
- membership becoming more involved in local "Economic Development Partnership"
- interact to help keep local economic climate conducive to helping businesses expand or start up
- work with local businesses (industry) to aid adolescent-aged kids' job opportunities

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Recognizing and dealing with substance abuse in children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- teaching parents to recognize signs of drug use
- teaching parents how to deal with children abusing drugs and teach prevention
- community support in providing programs for children abusing drugs, along with support groups

Help prevent the spread of STD's

Policy Council Action Steps:

- teach parental skills on how to talk to children about STD's
- training parents to help prevent spread of STD's
- support groups for families and children dealing with STD's

Help prevent truancy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- accountability of parents for truancy
- better school board policies to document truancy to hold parents accountable
- educational program for parents as to their liability for allowing their children not attend school

Policy Recommendation

1. Continue to work closely with local existing agencies, groups, etc., to further enhance children's needs.
2. Seek a partnering affect with adjacent counties toward establishing regional resources for children's crisis.
3. Our local doctor's clinics are very helpful in child health, as well as, the local health department. We should work to continue heightened level of service delivery from these entities.
4. Parents/Guardians seek early intervention of crisis children from one parent or no parent homes.
5. Juvenile Justice- We currently have a good system in this; look at more regional aspects to aid in this area.
6. Try to stimulate meeting forums to help parents be more responsible on children/adolescent whereabouts/activities. Possibly secure grants for school crosswalk areas, to help eliminate accidents.
7. Community collaboration- Interact closely with church groups and public agencies as to children crisis issues.
8. Young Children-A) Try and stimulate more approved day-care facilities. B) Work with health department to readily inform young mother/parents about importance of young children's mind development.
9. Education- Continue to work with local education board/principals to develop more job training skills.
10. Economic Opportunities- As a CPC, attempt to encourage and foster economic development of the area so children and families can progress.
11. Other, Victim Advocacy- Work with the Washington County Law Enforcement and Washington County domestic Violence Task Force to support victim advocacy.